

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

1. Claim Amendments

The Applicant has amended claims 2-3, 9-16, 19, 22-23, 25-26, 30-34 and 37-38 and claims 1, 24 and 35-36 have been canceled. Accordingly, claims 2-23, 25-34 and 37-38 are pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

2. Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 1-3 and 24-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Martin et al. (7,295,638) (hereafter Martin).

In order to expedite allowance of this application, the Applicant has canceled claims 1 and 24 without prejudice. Therefore, the rejection with respect to these claims is deemed to be moot. The Applicant has amended claims 2-3 and 25-26 to depend from conditionally allowed claims 22 and 38, respectively. Therefore, the allowance of claims 1-3 and 24-26 is respectfully requested.

3. Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a)

Claims 4, 5, 27 and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Martin in view of Imamura et al. (US 7,149,266) (hereafter Imamura). Claims 4-5 and 27-28 now indirectly depend from conditionally allowed claims 22 and 38, respectively.

Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Martin and Imamura, as applied to claims 5 and 28 above, and further in view of Abraham et al. (US 7,184,464) (hereafter Abraham). Claim 6 now indirectly depends from conditionally allowed claim 22.

Claims 7, 8, 9 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Martin, Imamura and Abraham, as applied to claim 6 above, and further in view of Lennen et al. (US 6,888,879) (hereafter Lennen). Claims 7-9 and 29 now indirectly depend from conditionally allowed claims 22 and 38, respectively.

Therefore, the allowance of claims 4-9 and 27-29 is respectfully requested.

4. Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicant notes with appreciation the conditional allowance of claims 10-23 and 30-38. Claims 10-11, 16, 22-23 and 37-38 were rewritten in independent form including all limitation of the base claims and any intervening claims. Claims 10-16, 19, 22-23, 30-34 and 37-38 have been amended to incorporate, directly or indirectly, said conditionally allowed independent claims.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, the Applicant believes all of the claims currently pending in the Application to be in a condition for allowance. The Applicant, therefore, respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw all rejections and issue a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims.

The Applicant requests a telephonic interview if the Examiner has any questions or requires any additional information that would further or expedite the prosecution of the Application.

Respectfully submitted,

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